you say, we held all the power. But the curse of those eight months was the absence of a national, universally recognized Assembly closely tied to the people and expressing their will. We were trying to call such an Assembly to life. . . . If you suspect us of delaying the elections, why did you carry out your coup on the eve of the convocation of the Assembly? Even if you were right in accusing us, here is the Constituent Assembly, here is the body expressing the will of the great majority of the people, a body that unites all national groups in Russia and can lead all of them to the common goal. If this body is destroyed, if you cross this last line, the protracted anarchy of civil war will weaken and bleed our democracy, and thus, following this only way open to it, counterrevolution will conquer what was once called the Russian revolution. . . ." [17]

The Communists were unable to dispel the impression of this speech on the audience. But they had no intention of yielding. Processions of civilians converging toward the Tauride Palace from different parts of the city were stopped by machine guns and many demonstrators were killed or wounded. Emma was in one of these processions and told me of these scenes of horror and despair.

At midnight the Assembly began to discuss the war and land problems. The left withdrew from the hall, leaving the rump Assembly at the mercy of the mob. The guards demanded that the chairman close the session, their sergeant explaining, "We are tired and want to go to bed." The meeting continued, however, and three declarations were voted—on the republican form of government, transfer of land to the peasants, and peace negotiations in the name of the Assembly.

The next day the Tauride Palace was guarded by troops and the deputies were not permitted to enter. A day later, on January 20, the Council of People's Commissars announced that the Constituent Assembly had been dissolved because its counterrevolutionary majority had refused to recognize the conquests of the revolution. This was the end of the democratic revolution in Russia. The country entered a long period of civil war from which a new form of absolutism, the totalitarian state, was to emerge.

IN RETROSPECT

The defeat of the democratic revolution in Russia was a turning point in world history. It was also a turning point in the lives of millions of Russian intellectuals, mine among others. It therefore seems appro-

[17] Tseretelli meant the counterrevolution of the right. Actually, all values for which the liberation movement had stood and fought were destroyed by the Bolsheviks themselves.